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Letter dated 13 June 2012 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 1 June 2012 from His Excellency Boni Yayi, President of Benin and current Chairperson of the African Union, regarding the security situation in Africa and particularly in Mali (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the aforementioned letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) BAN Ki-moon

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Annex

Letter dated 1 June 2012 from the Chairperson of the African Union to the Secretary-General

[Original: French]

In my capacity as Chairperson of the African Union, I have the honour to inform you of the following:

At a time when the African continent is fighting to meet the challenges of development that will allow it to lead its peoples towards progress and social well-being, we are noting a resurgence of crises and the degradation of the security situation in Africa.

This situation, which has been observed in recent months in the Sahara-Sahel region and in the Horn of Africa, is of some concern.

With particular reference to the Sahara-Sahel region, the case of Mali is very worrying. Indeed, the collapse of the army and the removal of all State structures has created the conditions for Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), along with various organized crime networks, to control the entire North (over 800,000 square km). The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and Ansar Eddine served as a front for AQMI, which currently has free rein to conduct its activities within the Sahel and to use it as a base.

The connection between the peoples and area of the Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the internationalization of troops makes the Sahel a danger for all countries of the region and even beyond. It is at the same time a passageway to other regions and a sanctuary serving as a logistics and training base and staging area for all Salafist and Islamist groups of the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa and the global jihadist movement and finally, as a reservoir of recruits.

If the current situation is not swiftly brought to an end, each neighbouring country will see the birth of its own Ansar Eddine, which will have the objective of waging jihad (holy war) on its national soil, in the image of Boko Haram.

Furthermore, AQMI having established itself at the geographic heart of the Muslim area of Africa, made up of young populations, out of work and seeking reference points and prospects, all the peoples of the Sahel and ECOWAS can find themselves destabilized and may provide an ideal breeding ground for recruitment and takeover.

Added to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a phenomenon that is no less dangerous, transnational organized crime, in particular drugs and narcotics. According to information we have received, an average of 100 tons of cocaine, or 40 per cent of Europe's consumption, transit each year through the Sahel.

There is also the impact of ransoms paid for the release of hostages, estimated at close to US$ 200 million per year, in an environment of poverty and insecurity.

In view of all these facts, I call on all members of the Security Council, especially its permanent members, to support without delay the decision of the

African Union to send an African military force composed in particular of ECOWAS countries.

Essentially, the following action is needed:

- Adoption of a résolution taking into account the disastrous repercussions on and decay in the values of a free world, namely peace, security and stability, and on each citizen of our planet and to avoid what we like to call a West African Afghanistan;
- Acceptance of the joint request of the African Union Peace and Security Council and ECOWAS asking the Security Council to adopt a strong resolution giving United Nations cover to this inter-African force with a view to very rapid intervention for the purpose of ridding this part of Africa of the peril of terrorism which every citizen of the world faces today;
- Making available to this inter-African force logistics, aircraft and other materiel; that force will move swiftly to restore and ensure the security of the institutions and leadership of Mali, to strengthen the capacity of the Malian army and re-establish its chain of command in order to rid West Africa of this terrorist threat and crime of all types.

Time is not on our side, for after the destruction of a traditionally democratic Mali, the next target could be Niger and its underground resources (uranium, oil, gas) and finally the other States of the subregion, the Mediterranean, Europe, Asia and America.

AQMI is a branch of Al-Qaida which operates in Afghanistan and of Boko Haram, which operates in Nigeria.

The peril of religious intolerance is real and present. The goal is to transform all of West Africa into an Islamic republic based on sharia.

I am making a heartfelt appeal on behalf of the African continent and I would be infinitely grateful if you would listen to the voice of a vast continent of over 30 million square km, of outrageous and impressive geological riches, a continent which has taken up the path of economic growth again and is full of hope and expectation.

With peace and stability, this continent, which has shown signs of economic recovery, could be a strong engine of growth able to bring the whole planet along, if its efforts to establish improved governance of business and strengthening of democracy, the rule of law and institutions are taken into account.

Swift action is in the interest of all, for we have a common destiny.

So that I may reassure my colleagues on this continent, a prompt reply on your part will be appreciated.

I know I can count on your contribution to save our world from the dangers threatening it.

(*Signed*) Dr. Boni Yayi